UNESCO SOURCES

VOL. 35 MARCH 1992

FREE BUT FRAGILE MEDIA

AFRICAIN WRITERS:
"AN ENDANGERED SPECIES"

MEDICINAL PLANTS:
GOOD MEDICINE, BITTER PILLS?

Readers, we have reserved this page for your comments, suggestions and criticisms. Consider it yours !

THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER

Prof. Alois G. Englander
Secretary General
World Congress Alternatives and Environment

In your article "More Power to Them" (January), you write: *"Adding purification systems to outdated power stations is often not even rational. Costs are way out of proportion to their profitability and expected life span. In any case, lignite, a low-grade coal with a high sulphur content, must go."*

I consider this statement incorrect, because one can use those purification systems for outdated power stations immediately, and later on, when these are modernized, simply switch them to the new ones on the same spot, because the stations are usually located where the coal is.

In the next paragraph, you quote Mr. Pavel Erban of Czechoslovakia: *"Nearly half our children have allergies caused by pollution. We cannot continue to burn lignite. Our only options are gas and nuclear energy."*

This gentleman does not seem to have heard of electricity saving through modern equipment and higher prices, and from small hydro-electric power stations and alternative energies, nor is he conscious of the fact that nuclear energy, aside from its dangers, is by far the most expensive.

Your letter prompts me to make the following remarks: The phrase "nearly half our children have allergies caused by pollution," is a misinterpretation of my words. I in fact said that nearly 20% of the population and nearly 30% of children suffer from allergies due to pollution. These percentages cannot, of course, be added together.

It is, unfortunately, impossible for us to produce from 70% to 75% of our electricity in hydro-electric plants, to export electricity in the summer and to import fossil or nuclear fuels in the winter, the way Austria does. (Felix Austria!).

We are, however, not particularly happy about the necessity for building nuclear power plants.

As for recourse to more rational energy consumption and to alternative energies, I regret that Prof. Englander has taken the matter of lignite out of the overall energy context, on the basis of a single phrase in an article. I have been working on these questions for a long time now and I know how difficult the choice of solutions, however necessary, can be.

Finally, it is the tone of the criticism which is offensive and takes us back to the worst years of our history.

** Ing. Pavel Erban*

** Coordinator for Czechoslovakia, First series of Round Tables organized by UNESCO on "Strategic Issues for the Reform of Energy Systems in Central and Eastern Europe."*

AT LAST, SOME CONCRETE ACTION!

Hélène Julien
Architect
Poitiers, France

For years, UNESCO has been bombarding us with a lot of high-sounding words and phrases about women's rights, equality of the sexes, and so on.

At last we're seeing some concrete action: a Woman! Mme Marie Bernard-Meunier takes over an eminent position, as Chairperson of UNESCO's Executive Board (SOURCES January 1992).

The fact that she is French Canadian and has married a Frenchman also warms my, international but nonetheless Francophile, heart.

INDIA IN ANGKOR VAT

D.K. Mallik
First Secretary
Permanent Delegation of India to UNESCO
Paris

The coverage on Angkor in your January issue was stimulating. I noted, however, some criticism of the work carried out on the site by the Indian archaeological teams.

I wish to point out that under a bilateral agreement with Cambodia, the Archaeological Survey of India has, since 1986, taken several concrete measures, in different phases, to restore the Angkor Vat complex - including major repairs, chemical conservation and reconstruction. The ongoing work is being stepped up further. India is currently the only country to have committed considerable financial resources and technical expertise. Cambodian leaders, including Prince Sihanouk, have publicly appreciated these efforts.

Now that the international community would provide funds to Cambodia to maintain its historic monuments, India would additionally participate in all such multilateral endeavours. Ideally, all efforts under UNESCO's umbrella should be well coordinated and streamlined. Duplication and crossed-wires should be avoided. Simultaneously, the actual work already done by India, despite our resource constraints, in the context of its strong cultural ties with the Indo-China region, should be duly appreciated in the spirit they have been and are being undertaken, just as we would welcome similar efforts from other quarters.

THE STRUGGLE FOR AN IDEA

It was at UNESCO, among whose principle mandates is the fight against racism, that South African President, Frederick de Klerk, came to call for an end to the ostracism to which his country has subjected itself within the United Nations system.

Mr. de Klerk and Nelson Mandela were at UNESCO Headquarters on February 3 for highly symbolic ceremonies at which the two leaders were awarded the Felix Houphouët-Boigny Prize for Peace Research. The event was a symbol of hope for a new South Africa. But also, as South Africa's President noted, it marked a time for his country "to come back in from the cold and to play its proper role, which will be a constructive one in Africa and in world affairs."

More precisely, said M. de Klerk at a news conference later, "South Africa is willing, able and prepared to resume a constructive role within the UN system", contingent, however, insisted M. Mandela, on the installation of a truly representative "transitional government".

It was at UNESCO that the international isolation of South Africa began. In 1956, the country left the Organization whose General Conference two years earlier called for the "eradication in all possible ways of the evil of discrimination". From that time on, the isolation of the country intensified, particularly at the United Nations where South Africa has been deprived of the vote since 1974. To justify its departure, Pretoria had reproached UNESCO with interference in the racial problems of South Africa. Thus there was no doubt whatsoever that equality was to be crushed there. In vain. And once the death certificate of the ideology of apartheid duly signed, it was at the UN Agency entrusted with matters of the spirit that South Africa's President came to voice his hopes for reintegration with the UN system.

It may not, therefore, be presumptuous to consider this action as proof that the struggle for an idea bordering on both the moral and the political was not only legitimate but has also borne fruit.

René LEFORT

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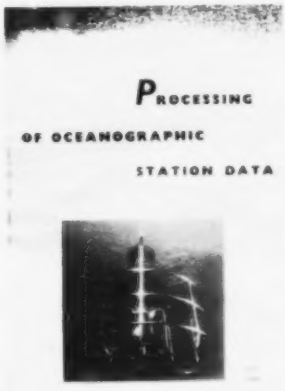
BOOKS

PROCESSING OF OCEANOGRAPHIC STATION DATA

An "on-station" working tool and a classroom teaching aid, this volume contains recommended guidelines on how to calculate, either by computer algorithms, or hand calculations, most of the common physical and dynamic properties of the sea, such as specific stability, density ratio, etc. Developed by international scientists in the name of the Joint Panel of Oceanographic Tables and Standards (JPOTS), under the sponsorship of UNESCO and other bodies, it also provides a working knowledge of the basic physical and dynamic properties of the sea, thus helping to prepare oceanographers for the challenges of large-scale international projects



● ***Processing of Oceanographic Station Data,*** *by JPOTS editorial panel, UNESCO, 1991, 138 pp., 150 FF.*

BOOK PROMOTION, SALES AND DISTRIBUTION: A Management Training Course

UNESCO has for some time supported training programmes for personnel from the publishing, printing and book distribution sectors of developing countries, working actively to offset what has been described as the "book hunger" in the Third World by providing these countries with financial and technical assistance. Following a first manual entitled *The Business of Book Publishing* (1990), this volume continues the series of training manuals developed jointly by Book House Training Centre (London, UK) and UNESCO. Along with upcoming *Bookselling*, the three manuals provide a comprehensive review of book trade practice.

● ***Book Promotion, Sales and Distribution: A Management Training Course,*** *Book House Training Centre/UNESCO, 1991, 165 pp., 240 FF.*

INCREASING TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS

Departing from the premise that whatever new materials are distributed or new curriculum developed, the quality of an education system depends first and foremost on teachers, this book summarizes a wealth of research in both developed and developing countries on the important issue of how teachers and schools can be made increasingly effective. It also provides instruments for researchers and planners who would like to study what really happens in the classroom.

● ***Increasing Teacher Effectiveness,*** *by Lorin W. Anderson, Fundamentals of Educational Planning, UNESCO/International Institute for Educational Planning, 1991, 133 pp., 40FF.*

PERSPECTIVES ON LITERACY: a selected world bibliography

A report on 25 years of research and action in the field of literacy by the international community, this *selected world bibliography* takes a fresh look at literacy and its new practical and theoretical horizons. It patiently prepares the way into the decade of the 1990s, making a firm contribution to worldwide efforts for universal literacy, and accepting the fact that no country, rich or poor, has escaped two of the great scourges of the 20th century: illiteracy and functional illiteracy.

● ***Perspectives on Literacy: a selected world bibliography,*** *by Shapour Rassekh, UNESCO/Librairie du Liban, IBEdata, 1991, 300 pp., 120 FF.*

PERIODICALS

NATURE & RESOURCES

Managing Our Common Resources

The articles published in this issue (No. 4, 1991) of N&R are devoted to people who, whether they are users of a fishery, an irrigation system, a forest, a

grazing area or other types of common-pool resources sustain these systems because they depend on the resources for their livelihood. The articles comprise an excellent sample of the work presented at the Second Annual Conference on Common Property, an interdisciplinary, international and intersectoral event held in Winnepeg (Canada) last September.

THE UNESCO COURIER

Women speak out on the Environment

Devoted to what women are thinking and doing about the ecological crisis, their thoughts and actions rooted in centuries of observation and understanding of nature, this issue (March) raises the question of whether, in fact, women have a special environmental awareness. They are portrayed at the forefront of environmental action, warning against unlimited economic growth and expansion and speaking out against marginalization of peoples and countries in the North and in the South. Articles report on a self-help housing project in Costa Rica, a Japanese Women's Club which protests against the excesses of a consumer society, and Kenya's "Green Belt" movement and include the point of view of American feminist Bella Abzug on the eve of the Earth Summit and an interview with Indian physicist Vandana Shiva.

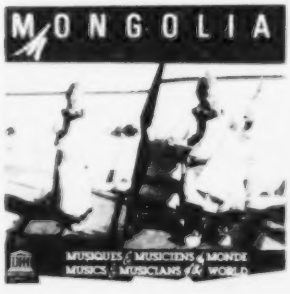
RECORDS

TRADITIONAL MUSIC OF MONGOLIA

Music and song are present in all the daily activities of the Mongols: at the milking; watching their herds; galloping across the steppe; in the evening beside the fire in the yurt. Singing is the most important form of Mongol music, which is above all pastoral with vocal techniques closely related to the spoken language. This recording provides a selection of the masterpieces of traditional Mongol music: "long songs" with long passages of vocalized ornamentation and "short" syllabic songs, others for special occasions and the famous "diphonic song".

The wide range of Mongol instruments features the *morin-khuur* ("horse viele") and the *tobshuur* lute, but also includes the Mongolian jew's harp, and several types of zithers.

Most of the pieces were recorded during a recent expedition, organized by the French *A la Recherche de Guillaume de Rubrouck* and the Mongolian "Mongol Horse" Associations, granted the status of Associated Project of UNESCO's Integral Study of the Silk Roads - Roads of Dialogue.



● ***Traditional Music of Mongolia.*** *Musics & Musicians of the World series, UNESCO/Auvidis, 1992, Cassette 52FF. Compact 109FF.*

Publications and periodicals are on sale at the Unesco Bookshop, or by order from Unesco Press, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris, and in Member States through national distributors. Catalogue on request.

SYLVIA A. EARLE: DOING WHAT MAKES HER HEART BEAT FAST

My work involves being underwater, and every dive is a pleasure. It also involves being behind a desk much of the time. When an underwater desk is perfected, I'll be a little happier", sums up Dr. Sylvia Alice Earle, Chief Scientist if the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the United States.

Dr. Earle, 56, will lead one of the legs of the 100-day Persian Gulf Expedition, organized by NOAA, UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) and the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME) and which began on February 26 from Muscat (Oman) aboard the 70m research vessel, Mount Mitchell.

The cruise is but another feather in the cap of this remarkable woman who *"always expected to become a scientist"*. A renowned diver, she has notched up more than 5,000 hours underwater and led more than 50 expeditions, many of them historic. In 1970, for example, she led the first team of women aquanauts during the Tektite habitat/laboratory project in the Virgin Islands, where she spent two weeks underwater. She also holds a depth record for solo deep diving to 1000 metres, in a one person submersible called "Deep Rover". *"Diving solo to such depths is inspiring, but not lonely,"* she says. *"Life is everywhere!"*

Earle's achievement's, which also include an impressive list of awards and the title *"Woman of the Year"*, bestowed upon her by the Los Angeles Times in 1970, are all the more striking in that she has managed to climb to right to the top in a very male dominated area.

"Many times I have been stopped by what some call the 'glass ceiling'. For example, as a student I aspired to go to sea aboard oceanographic research vessels. Men did not have to think about being denied access to ships because they were men; women took for granted that they would be as women. Many were surprised when I was accepted as a member of the scientific party aboard the Research Vessel Anton Bruun during the International Indian Ocean Expedition in 1964 (coordinated by the I.O.C.). I was the only woman, as was noted by a headline in the Mombasa Times that reported 'Sylvia sails away with 70 men!'"

On another occasion she recalls, the captain of a research vessel predicted it would sink because women were bad luck aboard ships. Although she agrees that attitudes have changed considerably *"some (still) question whether or not women 'belong' in the sea". "I have observed that about half of the fish, whales, seals, and many other forms of marine life are female. Why not a similar ratio of female ocean scientists?"*

The author of more than 70 publications on marine science and a major contributor to the development and implementation of undersea technology, Sylvia Earle works unceasingly to increase awareness of the importance of oceans to humanity's survival. *"Only a few nations are actively supporting significant ocean research programmes, and fewer still have demonstrated a strong commitment to developing new ocean technology,"* she laments. Hence, the importance of expeditions such as the Gulf voyage which *"will serve to bring together scientists from 15 countries who formerly did not have occasion to speak together"*.

Earle's devotion and enthusiasm for her work are contagious. Those who work with her describe her as *"magnificent"*, a *"tremendous source of inspiration to the ocean community"*. This obviously comes from her extraordinary abilities as a scientist, but also partly from a certain simplicity and sensitivity that she exudes.

Among her most remarkable experiences, she recounts, are meetings with horseshoe crabs on New Jersey beaches as a child that helped shape her interest in the sea. She is as excited and moved when diving with a group of 40000 kilo humpback whales in the Hawaiian Islands as when planting a tree.

"I try to practise what I preach. I tell those who ask me what direction in life they might take to listen to their heart and do what makes their 'heart beat fast', that they are likely to be the best at something if it is what they love the most ... and that in so doing they will never be bored, and will probably never feel poor."

Sue WILLIAMS

● *"This poet is ours and yours ... he belongs to all. Through his song, the course of his life has enriched the whole of humanity."* The poet is **PABLO NERUDA** and the speaker Gonzalo Figuerao Yanez, Chili's ambassador to UNESCO, paying hommage to his compatriot at a ceremony at Headquarters on March 3 at which a copper portrait of the poet was presented to the Organization by the Government of Chili and the Fundacion Neruda. Winner of the 1971 Nobel Prize for Literature, Pablo Neruda was an author of revolutionary songs who fought against tyranny in all its forms. The poet, who died in Santiago in 1973, served as Chili's ambassador to UNESCO and member of the Organization's Executive Board in 1971-72.

FREE BUT FRAGILE MEDIA

"We mean, by an independent press, a press independent from governmental, political or economic control, or from control of material and equipment essential for the production and dissemination of newspapers, magazines and periodicals." Thus, African media leaders, brought together by UNESCO in April 1991, set their own criteria for an independent press. By this measure, independence has been won for the majority of media in industrialized countries, most of the Asia-Pacific region and Latin America and the Caribbean. It is surging forward in Black Africa, and nascent in Eastern Europe.

UNESCO, for its part, has thrown its weight behind this evolution - helping watch over press freedom in Africa (p.10), reinforcing the Pan-African News Agency, PANA (p.11), getting the best out of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) which has just elected a new chairman (p.9), and in Eastern Europe, working closely with various media networks (p.14). The dossier closes with a report on community media development in the Philippines (pp.15-16) - one of the means by which deprived populations can help themselves.

The problems and pitfalls of a free press emerging in the wake of democratization in Africa are eloquently illustrated by the case of the bimonthly *Haské*.

* * *

Editing a paper in Niger is not the most restful profession. The daily traps are so numerous that, since June 10, 1991, they got the better of the only national daily, *Le Sahel*, which stopped publishing despite large government subsidies.

Yet, *Haské* ("Light" in the Hausa language), a private bimonthly of information and reflection, created in May 1990 by a former editor-in-chief of the government press, keeps on *"enlightening the people of Niger"*. For, as its founder, Mr Ibrahim Sheik Diop, declares, *"there is no democracy without freedom of expression."* But what a bitter battle - when every issue is something of a miracle!

The illiteracy rate is over 70%; the only modern printing press in Niamey, the capital, has gone bankrupt; advertisers show little interest in the print media; the distribution network for newspapers is inexistant, and moreover Niger (1,287,000km2) has no airline; the economic gloom is such that several banks and businesses have closed their doors. For Niger, plunged into total destitution, a newspaper is a luxury.

When *Haské* was born, *"because no law was opposed to it,"* it also had to confront the wrath of politicians little receptive to criticism and the language of democracy. Editorialists of the government press were mobilized against the *"agitator"*, the *"grave digger of national unity"*. They even accused Diop, who was of foreign origin, of ingratitude toward the country he had adopted and which had given him everything. And there was an even more pernicious measure: state companies, the main advertisers, secretly received orders not to place any advertising in *Haské*.

These pressures, at a time when demands for democracy and multipartism were streaming in from all over, had the opposite effect: *"the government media gave us a lot of publicity by their headlines,"* Diop remembers. *Haské*, by making itself the leading voice in the fight for freedom, had no trouble finding readers: the 10,000 copies of each of its first issues sold *"like hot cakes"*.

PRINTING TOO EXPENSIVE

But in the beginning Ibrahim Diop only had 1,400,000 CFA (28,000 FF) at his disposal, lent by a banker friend. Because of the size of the territory, it took at least a month to recover the product of the sales. In the opinion of everybody, printing is too expensive in Niger.

So he took up his pilgrim's staff. *La Gazette du Golfe*, which had just been created in Cotonou (Benin), 1,200km from Niamey, offered him advice and an invitation to set up operations there. A cost comparison then convinced Diop to print *Haské* in Cotonou.

Since then, a network established between *Haské*, *La Gazette du Golfe*, *Sud-Hebdo* in Senegal, and *Le Messager* in Cameroon, in late 1990 has become the private *Société des éditeurs de la presse*. Through its mediation with financial backers, Diop was able to install desktop publishing material and a photo lab. *"The next aim is a printing plant and transformation of the paper into a Société des Editions Haské,"* Diop declares. Subscriptions for capital were launched in 1991.

In the same way he wants to complete an *"alternative distribution system, consisting basically of selling by street venders and in such outlets as grocery stores."* Finally, on the editorial level, *Haské* must reinforce its credibility and its independence, especially since two competitors have just come into existence in Niger, and the country's democratization makes readers more and more exacting ...

* * *

This example, admittedly in the context of a particularly destitute Third World country, illustrates a basic truth: the formal founding of democracy, or, as often is the case, the gradual slipping from absolute totalitarianism to partial democracy, does not create, as if by magic, all the conditions

necessary for the blossoming of an independent and pluralistic media.

First of all, and very simply, because the heritage is heavy and cumbersome, and because transitions tend to be long and chaotic, from every point of view.

This legacy weighs heavily on legislation which it takes time to change and whose absence often maintains a sort of *"artistic blur"* that can drive journalists to self-censorship. It also weighs on their conscience and spirit: journalists who have always been forced to play up to the regime in power, must often learn the basic rules governing the free exercise of their profession.

As a case in point, Ms Mia Doornaert, President of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) remembers the admission of a Romanian woman journalist who, after the fall of Ceaucescu, admitted she could express herself freely in French but was still incapable of doing so in her own language. But on the other hand, *"their minds had been so used to moving on two tracks,"* Ms Doornaert added, that the journalists had no trouble giving up official language and saying out loud what they had previously been thinking but keeping to themselves.

Such a heritage also permeates structures. Totalitarian countries often have monopolistic systems for importing paper, and for the printing and distribution of newspapers. These cannot be replaced immediately and thus, by their weight alone or through hidden opposition, restrain the activities of a free press. Sometimes, when governments have not totally abandoned the practices of their predecessors, these systems even prove to be more efficient for government information services than for those of the opposition: the former, according to Ms Doornaert's expression, then play the part of *"hidden levers of political control"* on the latter.

The same type of indirect pressure may be exerted on advertisers who are discreetly warned that advertisements placed in information media out of favour with the current authorities may jeopardize their own activities. Yet today, an independent newspaper or television channel cannot live, and even less expand, without advertising revenue.

And consider the case of many countries, especially in the Third World, where not only is advertising embryonic, but where the market in general is singularly limited for the press by the small size of the country, the low level of purchasing power, or even a high rate of illiteracy.

EXTERNAL FACTORS

These external factors, whether political, economic, or cultural, render all the more problematic the launching of a new medium which will most often be facing innumerable internal problems as well.

In this context, the power of international assistance is obviously limited when it comes to transforming, especially when it is hostile or unfavourable, the general environment in which an independent and pluralistic media is struggling to make a place for itself. Still international assistance can help a great deal.

Meetings between media professionals, whether they bring together seasoned and independent journalists, newcomers to the trade, or, indeed, only the latter, can be very useful.

This was clearly revealed by the "Informal East-West Press Meeting" (February 27-28, 1990) and the Windhoek (Namibia) seminar (April 29 - May 3, 1991) on *"the development of an independent and pluralistic African press"*.

In the course of the former, organised by UNESCO alone, leaders of media undergoing radical change in Eastern Europe began their first dialogue with their western counterparts, thus discovering a world they had only known by hear-say.

The latter, organised conjointly by UNESCO and the UN, made it possible for heads of African press enterprises to consult each other, if only to better explain their difficulties and their needs to the intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations prepared to help them.

Thus in both cases these meetings set the stage for concrete action, essentially directed toward Black Africa and Eastern Europe. This action involves very diverse partners, from NGOs like the IFJ and the International Federation of Newspaper Publishers, to international banking institutions or the co-operation agencies of the industrialized countries. Even if priorities vary from one region to another - the aid needed by Russian television, an empire with 22,000 employees, is obviously not the same as that required by *Haské* - the assistance falls into four categories.

The first is legal: helping to set up a new legal framework and monitoring freedom of the press. The second concerns training, not only of journalists, editors, photo-reporters, etc. but also of all the executive and managerial staff responsible for the smooth operation of the enterprise in a market economy. The third deals with infrastructure (information processing, printing, communications, etc.).

And the last, which in fact constantly inter-relates with the three others, brings into play the networks with which UNESCO co-operates, whether these networks deal with know-how, the mustering of financial resources, or already group an ensemble of means necessary for the pursuit of a common endeavour.

René LEFORT
with Idimama KOTOUDI
Niamey, Niger

UNSWERVINGLY INDEPENDENT

A bull in a China shop for some, a champion of media freedom for others, the new IPDC chairman sees himself as a man of ideals

Torben Krogh is known as a fierce campaigner for a free and independent media - someone who does not hesitate to lock horns or step on toes to defend his ideals. He does not, however, have a glowing reputation for his skills as a diplomat or politician. But for someone who sees himself first and foremost as a journalist, this particular "lack" is more a source of pride than regret.

Krogh, 49, is the new chairman of the Intergovernmental Council for UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). He was elected by acclamation at the Council's 13th session, held at Headquarters from February 17-24, after being proposed as a candidate by Mauritania, Mozambique and Venezuela. The result was expected, but nonetheless represents a turnaround in attitudes towards the Dane, who admits that he was considered *"persona non grata"* by many in the Third World during the 1989 debate on UNESCO's communication policies where he fought ardently for change ... and won.

The new Chairman began his career as a journalist in 1965 at the influential Danish daily "Information". He became chief editor there in 1969, a position he also held later (1974-1982) at another Copenhagen daily, "Socialistisk Dagblad". Krogh has also served on the boards of Radio Denmark, Danish TV-2 and the Danish Film Institute. Since 1990 he has continued as a freelance journalist as well filling the role of Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Danish School of Journalism and of the Journalism Training Centre. He is also a member of UNESCO's Executive Board.

An ardent supporter of improved training programmes, he believes this is where the IPDC should be concentrating its efforts. *"Big donors often provide a lot of equipment for communications in developing countries but carry out only sketchy training programmes,"* he explains. *"The IPDC, which cannot provide the material, does have the funds and the expertise to train personnel."*

He also believes that the development of their human resources and the promotion of a free and pluralistic media is the only way Third World countries can compete with, and offset the influence of, the major western media organizations - although he does not see the dominance of these organizations as a particular menace.

"Prior to Nepal's democratization, the main source of news for Nepalis about their country, was the BBC World Service. The problem lies not with the BBC, but the fact that these people could not get information from their own sources. The situation is more complex when it comes to entertainment programmes. Nobody forces Third World countries to buy second rate American entertainment series, however we all know they are poor and that these series are sold very cheaply and there's no doubt that this is creating problems with national identities...

"We should keep the discussion about the effects of the international flow of information alive, and we should not be afraid to criticise. This is not infringement of press freedom - that can only happen if legal or other obstacles are put into place."

"A FEW VERDICTS"

Krogh has enough direct experience of those *"obstacles"* to know what he is talking about. *"Having been an editor of two daily newspapers I have had my share of convictions, for defamation and once, a breach of the Danish security act,"* he says, and then adds with a chuckle *"but a good editor should have a few verdicts against him to show precisely that he has tested the outer limits of press freedom."*

The next verdict that he will have to contend with will be that of the IPDC members, who expect results, especially in increased funding for the programme. He has already squeezed an extra $300,000 out of the Danish government, thus doubling its annual contribution. This remains, though, but a drop in the bucket. The programme's annual budget is a mere three million dollars and donor countries are few. Krogh is well aware of the shortfalls. *"However there are other ways of making the IPDC work and stretching the resources we have further,"* he suggests. *"For example, I see it as a sort of market place where projects are put into circulation and buyers sought. There are number of projects underway around the world at the moment that have come through the IPDC but are not regarded as our projects because they have been funded by other sources."*

While he may not fit the role of model diplomat, he believes he is *"something of a political animal"* and tenacious enough to meet the challenge before him. As a keen player of chess by correspondance, in which matches can sometimes take up to one and a half years to complete, he has honed his skills at planning his moves in advance and having the patience to wait for the results - two virtues he will certainly need in his new job.

Sue WILLIAMS

TORBEN KROGH (LEFT) IS WELCOMED TO HIS NEW JOB BY OUTGOING CHAIRMAN FRANCOIS HUDSMANN (SWITZERLAND) (Photo UNESCO/ Michel Claudo)

ALL ARTICLES ARE FREE OF COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS. SEE P. 3

IN DEFENCE OF AFRICA'S FREE PRESS

Through daily surveillance of press freedom, a 6-month old Dakar-based journalists' organization is causing governments to sit up, take notice, and be more careful

Abdoulaye Ndiaga Sylla is project coordinator of the **"Defence of Press Freedom in West Africa"**. He talked to Diomansi Bomboté in Dakar.

- What is the project about?

- The defence of press freedom in West Africa was created at the second congress of the Union of West African Journalists (UJAO) in August 1991. It has been operative since May 1991, but we're actually still in the process of setting it up.

- What sort of action do you undertake?

Ours is a three-pronged action. First immediate intervention - that is daily surveillance of press freedom. Once we are alerted, whether by our national affiliates or by any human rights organisation, we respond at once and cross-check any alleged violation. Once it is established, we send protest letters to the authorities concerned and publish a communique to alert the international media. We also send copies to organisations involved in defending such issues.

Such intervention is frequent. Whether it follows the arrest and indictment of journalists for offence towards a head of state, repeated destruction of the offices of independent newspapers, the occupation of state radio by putschists, the firing of a journalist for an editorial that upset certain quarters, transfers which in fact are sanctions, the expulsion of a foreign correspondent, the outright banning of a certain issue ... the list is long!

The second aspect is permanent action when immediate intervention has no effect: press campaigns and conferences. We also undertake missions, like the one we plan to send to Liberia to get a better idea of press freedom there given the crisis afflicting the country.

And finally, we publish. The bi-monthly "SOS-Press Freedom in West Africa" is in a way our control panel with up-to-date reports on the situation in the countries of member organisations. We also publish in-depth articles on the progress of press freedom in Africa and give information about the situation in each of our member countries. We are working on a project to publish an annual report on the press in West Africa, state by state, a comparative study of laws operative in our countries and the findings of the various missions we undertake.

- Where does funding come from?

- Essentially from the Ford Foundation which has allocated $170,000 to us since 1988. It's our only source of finance and backs all our initiatives. Some $15,000 worth of office equipment was also given by the United Kingdom. But nevertheless we have budgetary problems. Which is why we appeal to organisations like UNESCO which has agreed to include our project in the list submitted to the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC).

- How about member organisations? Do they contribute?

- We had decided to fix an annual fee and members agreed to contribute financially. However these contributions have not yet begun coming in and we're aware that the UJAO cannot survive from subsidies alone.

- But as an NGO, do you not find it difficult to accept aid from intergovernmental organisations?

- No. We feel that in the area of communication, UNESCO is an indispensable supra-national structure. We appreciate its efforts in this domain. The Windhoek seminar, which brought together African media leaders last April and where we both learnt a lot and enlarged our network, is a good example of UNESCO's new policies in this direction. The main thing for us is to conserve our autonomy.

- What do you think of the state of communication in the world?

- On a global level, democratic forces are taking charge of and defending press freedom much more than a few years ago. Thus the situation has slightly improved. The private press is now an undeniable reality in Africa where it plays an important role in the democratic process. We would like organisations like UNESCO to be an integral part of this movement.

- Could you expand on this?

- A fundamental preoccupation of African journalists is press freedom, the need to promote the free press, both of which are UNESCO's concerns today. The Organization's new strategy includes the journalistic dimension, whereas previously it stressed the role of the government. In theory this was to reharmonize north-south exchanges, but in practice this allowed governments to better control their press.

- How have African countries reacted to your activities?

- Several have responded badly. But the fact that heads of state and political personalities react to our protests proves they are aware of our existence. We are not surprised by adverse reaction in some quarters - that is to be expected. What is important is that these governments know that they are under surveillance and are consequently more careful. ■

NEW PROSPECTS FOR PANA

Launched nine years ago, the Pan African News Agency has never fully established itself. Today UNESCO hopes to help it get off to a fresh start

The Director-General of the Pan African News Agency (PANA), can only be reached at home. The Dakar-based agency's telephone and telex lines were cut eight months ago.

Director Auguste Mpassi-Muba (Congo) underlines the seriousness of the situation: 13 years after its creation and nine years after sending out its first dispatch, *"PANA can not yet pay its own way."*

It was in the hope of *"saving the agency from extinction"* that he attended the mid-February meeting in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) of information ministers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). OAU Member States, whose contributions constitute PANA's only financial resource, owe the agency $18 million.

"The situation can only worsen with all the social and political upheavals," says Mpassi-Muba, against a background of galloping economic recession. Forced to lay off half its personnel in December, the agency has accumulated some $15 million in unpaid salaries and other debts.

With a staff of 120, PANA produced an average daily 25,000 words in French and English. But it has never managed to establish its credibility. Yet, African journalists feel it has had a positive impact even if *"it has not always been able to rise to the occasion."* Journalists at both the *Soleil* in Dakar and the *Times of Zambia* point out that PANA did have its *"use value"*, and according to the editor-in-chief of the latter, *"gave a more complete picture of certain African events than western agencies."*

THROUGH AFRICAN EYES

In its December 16 editorial, however, *The Herald* of Zimbabwe underlined the paradox of an agency initiated by governments which now shirk their responsibility by failing to pay their contributions. *"Hailed as the ultimate in reporting news on the continent through African eyes,"* the daily continued, *"PANA has done nothing more than ensure that it is a continental public relations arm of governments. That has only helped to dent its credibility."*

A specialized agency of the OAU, PANA is run by an intergovernmental council. In effect, it functions as a pool of national news agencies. Its mandate prevents it from using any other source of information about a country's internal problems. In other words, when trouble breaks out and the national news agency concerned remains silent, PANA does likewise.

When bilateral differences appear, it walks on eggs. The agency was, for instance, accused of providing no copy on the 1988 riots in Algeria or on recent ethnic massacres in which thousands died.

SELLING PAPERS IN OUAGADOUGOU, BURKINA FASO (Photo UNESCO/F. Chevalier).

PANA's inability to cover some of the major events in Africa in the last few years has left a bitter taste in the mouths of its promoters. The contradition is that it was set up precisely to furnish more complete information about a continent which already feels ignored by the international media.

"News about Africans by Africans" – that was the dream of African leaders who called for the creation of such an agency as early as 1963, at the OAU summit. PANA, which became operational only 20 years later, is also a child of UNESCO, which at the time, mobilized some $2.8 million from various sources to help set up infrastructure and technical resources.

Today, a re-orientation is in order. Mpassi-Muba is fully aware that radical changes are needed for the very survival of the agency he has been heading since 1985. He says he has asked for *"UNESCO's advice on changing PANA's statutes."*

He's calling for no less than a total revolution – *"we have to free ourselves from government control."* Though in the immediate, he wants to push through reductions in personnel and expenses, he insists on long-term restructuring in line with UNESCO proposals:

1) the creation of a *"diversified economic structure"*, whereby governments can maintain 25% of the capital. The remainder would be open to regional banks, the private sector and independent media.

2) a financial re-orientation which would free PANA from being entirely dependent on state subsidies, and enable it to commercialize activities. But, points out Mpassi-Muba, *"we can't sell silence! PANA must have its own network of correspondents in African countries and be allowed to report on everything."*

3) restructuring news transmission. *"This is a major aspect,"* he said, since PANA has never had a dependable network. A satellite link is to replace radio-communications, which are totally inadequate. The new set-up will also permit PANA to sell its services to western media.

At the Addis Ababa meeting, several delegations *"rendered hommage to UNESCO for its support and its suggestions regarding PANA's restructuration."* The ministers also called for a *"revision of the agency's legal statutes"*. After consideration at another ministerial meeting in April, a final decision on these proposals will be taken at the OAU annual summit.

On the positive side, Mpassi-Muba notes that *"PANA today includes some 30 national agencies as opposed to only a few at its inception."* Regional networks have been set up and thanks to UNESCO's active collaboration, an impressive training programme has been carried out.

These developments could well form the base for a new pan-African agency, which through its freedom of expression, might become a vital part of the continent's growing democratic movement.

Nicolas MICHAUX

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THE SPRING OF THE AFRICAN PRESS

Black Africa, particularly the region's francophone countries, has witnessed in recent years a veritable blooming of "independent" newspapers. The map below presents a random selection of these new

AURORE

MALI, bi-monthly.
Founded in 1990. Circulation : 7.000

Le Cafard Libéré

SENEGAL, weekly.
Founded in 1987. Circulation : 10.000

Sud hebdo

SENEGAL, weekly.
Founded in 1987. Circulation : 20.000

THE POINT

GAMBIA, weekly.
Founded in 1991. Circulation : 2.000

LE NOUVEL HORIZON

COTE D'IVOIRE, weekly.
Founded in 1990. Circulation : 15.000

Courrier du Golfe

TOGO, bi-weekly.
Founded in 1989. Circulation : 12.500

Je Sais Tout

BENIN, bi-monthly.
Founded in 1990. Circulation : 5.000

TAM-TAM

BENIN, bi-monthly.
Founded in 1990. Circulation : 6.000

La Gazette du GOLFE

BENIN, bi-monthly.
Founded in 1987. Circulation : 15.000

publications compiled with help from two NGOs, the Panos Institute and Reporters sans Frontières. Circulation and frequency can vary according to local conditions.

BURKINA FASO, daily.
Founded in 1991. Circulation : 8.000

NIGER, weekly.
Founded in 1990. Circulation : 10.000

CHAD, weekly
Founded in 1990. Tirage : 15.000

CAMEROON, daily.
Founded in 1990. Circulation : 50.000

MOZAMBIQUE, quarterly.
Founded in 1991. Circulation : 10.000

ZAIRE, daily.
Founded in 1991. Circulation : 10.000

ZAIRE, daily.
Founded in 1990. Circulation : 10.000

LEARNING FREEDOM

Eastern Europe's newly emerging independent media calls for help as it struggles to find its feet

They are mammoths. On top of the list, and we're only talking of dailies, is the *Komsomolskaya Pravda* with a circulation of 13 million, followed by Troud (12 million). The older dailies, *Izvestia* and *Pravda* come far behind (four million and one million copies respectively). Yet these giants, the stars of the some 2000 "independent" publications that have appeared in the former Soviet Union since perestroïka, are in fact extremely fragile - reeling under the effects of the move from a planned to a market economy.

Most of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*'s readers pay slightly less than 30 rubles or the price of a packet of cigarettes for a one-year subscription! The real cost should be up around 200 rubles, or half the minimum old age pension. Prices are skyrocketing. Paper is becoming rare and its quality deteriorating. On the other hand there is no lack of infrastructure (printing presses and distribution networks), even if it is of dubious quality, but it remains in the hands of the former monopolies, which, to the rage of newspaper editors, keep hiking prices up.

The only solutions possible: selling copies of individual issues instead of the traditional sale through subscription, drastic cuts in expenses, and if necessary the number of pages, a desperate chase for advertisements (but advertisers remain few and far between) since it is clear that state subsidies will not be forthcoming; and finally opening up to foreign capital.

A FRENETIC RACE

Radio and television are in a different situation, with fragments of a shattered empire each involved in a frenetic race for an audience. The umbilical cord with state power, in financial terms particularly, has not yet been cut, but the new heads of the audiovisual media are well aware that they have little time in which to become self-sufficient.

The problems faced by independent media are similar throughout Central Europe, though on a smaller scale. Nonetheless, the "lagging behind" in media equipment and professional activities is more perceptible. And the big western communication groups (Murdoch, Maxwell, Bertelsmann, Hachette, Hersant, etc.) have already invested more in Central Europe than in the former USSR.

However, because of the size of this sector, and consequently the means required, even massive international aid will not be enough to get East European media out of the doldrums. International aid is still limited, but nonetheless plays a vital role. Material aid as such is modest. Independent media in the region are in general the successors of "official" media, from which they have inherited both means and equipment. Independent media that have sprung from nowhere and which have to set up from scratch are rare.

For its part, UNESCO will cover the costs of the replacement of a studio destroyed in the 1990 Vilnius riots. A feasibility study has also been carried out on the Romanian news agency ROMPRES, which is in a state of utter dilapidation. ROMPRES has just been given $100,000 in aid from the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). This is a significant move, as the IPDC has, up to now, focused exclusively on developing countries.

International aid is thus concentrating on providing the "know-how" through an exchange of professionals from East and West. *"Too many journalists, but too few good journalists"* is a phrase heard all to frequently in Eastern Europe these days.

This opening up of journalism is to take several forms: "traditional" training, advanced training, study tours, twinning arrangements between different media organizations, or simple meetings, either media to media or through journalism schools, professional organisations such as the International Federation of Newspaper Editors (IFNE), the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the World Press Freedom Committee, or international organisations such as the EEC, the Nordic Countries Council and the recently created European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (BERD).

AN UNKNOWN ENVIRONMENT

Journalists will obviously be the main targets, but technicians and media managers, who have to learn to work in the unknown environment that is the market economy, are also included.

Given its longstanding ties with media organisations and potential donors, UNESCO has decided to promote this exchange by acting as a kind of focal point where demands can be processed and transmitted to those likely to respond. Thus some 370 requests for training came in by the end of last year. Unfortunately only one tenth could be handled because even UNESCO's traditional partners lack the necessary means. The Organization is currently looking for $400,000 in supplementary resources for 1992/3 to keep up with the demand.

UNESCO has also backed the creation of the Central and Eastern Europe Media Centre in Warsaw (see SOURCES UNESCO No. 30). To help overcome the legal vacuum in the region, it has undertaken a comparative study on legislation in the audiovisual field in various countries.

The needs are enormous and the means limited. While international aid donors are accustomed to channelling support to the Third World, they must now adapt to an entirely new situation in Eastern Europe, and be flexible enough to cope with an ever changing scenario.

René LEFORT

TAMBULI: VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY

People empowerment in rural areas is the aim of a $ 4m community media project in the Philippines

To most of the 61 million Filipinos, Basco might as well be the edge of the world.

As a matter of fact, the island province of Batanes, of which Basco is the capital, is the northernmost end of the Philippines, about 600 kilometres away from Manila. It is closer to Taiwan in the north than to mainland Luzon, the largest island in this Asian nation of 7,107 islands.

Surrounded by rough seas most of the year, Batanes, with a population of 20,000, is separated from Luzon by the treacherous Babuyan Channel, through which only huge foreign cargo vessels dare sail. It has no radio or television station and no local newspaper, but receives broadcasts from Taiwan and mainland China and some of the more powerful Metro Manila radio stations. It also gets a few copies of the Metro Manila newspapers three times a week, when the Philippine Airlines plane lands, barring (frequent)inclement weather.

Laurel, on the other hand, is a small town of 23,000 people in Batangas province, located at the edge of Lake Taal, a crater-lake formed over the centuries by a series of eruptions from the Taal Volcano. However, Laurel is only about 85 kilometres from Metro Manila and is criss-crossed by powerful radio and TV signals from the capital. It also gets the Metro Manila newspapers regularly.

NO REAL VOICE OF ITS OWN

Like Basco though, Laurel is one of the poorer areas of the country, with no local radio station or newspaper to speak of and thus, no real voice of its own or means of communicating information to local populations. It is somewhat ironique that the populations of such remote areas can follow and discuss certain international events and yet, as in one case, not have heard or a major reforestation programme being undertaken in their own community. The Manila-based media is mainly owned by businessmen or politicians and puts little, if any emphasis on development and is of little relevance to isolated rural communities. Likewise, the commercial broadcasts of national or regional radio stations promote commercial consumption rather than local production which is of little service to poor rural communities. Even transport routes between villages in these regions are rugged and unpaved, further limiting communication.

The isolation of these two sites made them perfect locations for the pilot phase of a $4.2 million UNESCO project in communication for community development, funded by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and known as Tambuli.

PROJECT MANAGER, LOUIE TABING TRAINING BWIR RADIO STAFF
(Photo UNESCO/ Carlos Arnaldo)

It takes its name from the traditional carabao horn used by village chiefs to call an assembly where important decisions were made and information shared. It is also an acronym for *"Tinigng Aming Munting Bayan upang Umunlad ang mga Malilit"*, which means the Voice of our Small Community for the Development of the Underprivileged. Today, TAMBULI is a radio station or a local newsletter calling small Filipino communities to a meeting of minds so they can develop, which fits perfectly with the aims of the project.

"The plan is to develop FM radio stations and local newspapers in 12 economically depressed communities or isolated islands, as the case may be," said project manager Louie Tabing. Tabing a soft-spoken, amiable broadcaster in his forties, knows his subject. He has been a rural broadcaster for years and is chairman of the board of the Philippine Foundation of Rural Broadcasters which has 250 members in 13 regional chapters all over the country.

"These stations and the newspapers will then be used to broadcast and publish information relevant to the local populations and which will enable them to develop build and improve their living standards," he explained.

The key to the project's success is community participation. The people themselves plan and decide what to do. UNESCO-DANIDA gives the initial push through the establishment of a Community Media and Training Centre at each of the project sites to pass on the necessary expertise.

The operation of the radio stations and newspaper is supervised by a Community Council representing the farmers, fishermen, women, youth, tribal groups, business, religious and political leaders. The Council oversees broadcasts, publishing, training and other community building activities at the Centre, which should eventually be able to tap local resources and support itself.

The project allows for some commerical advertising, selected according to such criteria as possible product impact within the community and on the environment. Any income generated will be used for

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maintenance and development of the facilities and the training of personnel.

Each host community is equipped with a low-powered (10 to 100 watts) FM station with a coverage area of about 20 kilometres radius. Where possible and necessary, VHF link facilities are set up in neighbouring towns to extend the station's reach. Project engineer, Romy Carballo, is also designing the circuits for a 500 watt FM transmitter for use in particularly dense jungle or areas where the topography blocks signal radiation (this transmitter will also serve as a contribution from the project to UNESCO's programme on the development of new communications technologies).

FROM JUNGLE DEPTHS TO MOUNTAIN TOPS

The pilot phase started in 1991 with Basco in Batanes and Laurel in Batangas as the first two sites. The second phase - setting up the other 10 locations - will get underway next year and continue until 1996. At this stage the third site will probably be in Mt. Data, the second highest peak in the Philippines (over 2,000 metres) and one of the country's most remote and ill-served regions. Even getting there requires a 12-day hike over rugged terrain, as there are no roads into the region. The 12th site will probably be in Sulu, the southernmost end of the country, and home to a large Moslem population.

In Basco, radio station DWIR is already on the air with a new 20-watt FM transmitter costing $1,700.

"The plan now is to set up two relay stations on the other islands of Batanes province - Itbayat and Sabtang, which have no other communications facilities," according to Martin Allard, the British *"electronic sociologist"* who designed the low cost transmitter for UNESCO and visited the site in January 1992.

DWIR was set up in co-operation with the Batanes Development Foundation. The staff was trained for three months in the Institute of Development Communication, University of the Philippines (College of Agriculture, Los Banos).

The baseline study in August 1990 and the first evaluation study in December 1991 were conducted by the College of Mass Communication in the University of the Philippines Diliman. Both revealed that 98 per cent of the households in Batanes have radio sets, both AM and FM, higher than the national average of 88 per cent. Apparently radio is the island province's link to the outside world and its main source of information and entertainment. The project evaluation clearly showed that the station served a vital public need and that the island's inhabitants had become reliant on DWIR for receiving and transmitting local information and even getting messages to families on other islands where no other means of communication existed.

In Laurel, meanwhile, the plan is to set up a relay station on Tagaytay ridge, a few hundred metres above the town. The ridge overlooks Taal Lake. The relay station would transmit the signals to four or five neighbouring towns, including Tanauan, a commercial centre. This would expand the coverage of the station and make it attractive to advertisers.

The Laurel Community Council has been formed. Training of radio and newspaper staff is underway and the radio station will be set up by June this year.

The Basco and Laurel experiences show that TAMBULI is headed in the right direction. Will it really hasten local community development? Project evaluation will answer this question. Another crucial and far more difficult question is: Will the community media be able to function independently and continue to develop after UNESCO and DANIDA pull out in 1996? That is the challenge.

Crispin C. MASLOG
Philippine Press Institute

TO FIND OUT MORE ...

WORLD COMMUNICATION REPORT: One of the most comprehensive sources of information available on the subject, this Report is aimed at policy-makers, planners and practitioners. It details recent developments, as well as reference sources and practical contacts. The information was received from 44 specialized contributors, 20 UNESCO National Commissions, and 119 international and regional organizations. UNESCO, 1989.

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FOREIGN NEWS IN THE MEDIA: International reporting in 29 countries: A comparative study of news reporting in the press and through radio and TV over a 2-week period. UNESCO, "Reports & Papers on Mass Communication" (No. 93), 1985.

"THE MEDIA - WAYS TO FREEDOM" (the UNESCO Courier, September 1990): a series of articles on media freedom ranging from "the Conscience of the Journalist" (Jean Lacouture) to "The Price of a Free Press" (Babacar Touré) and "Media Empires: a Necessary Evil?" (Joseph Fitchett).

WOMEN AND MEDIA DECISION-MAKING: the invisible barriers. Case studies on professional women and broadcasting in Canada, Egypt, Ecuador, India and Nigeria published as part of UNESCO's Programme on the Contribution of the Media to Promoting Equality and Strengthening Women's Access to Communication. UNESCO 1987.

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The ***INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION*** (IPDC) has allocated $160,000 for the training of broadcast personnel in developing countries that are members of the Arab States Broadcasting Union, ASBU. The amount was accorded when the IPDC council met at Headquarters from February 17-24 (see Focus). Also among the 36 new projects that were given the go ahead by the Council were several that include the use of media in education, including the creation of an educational media unit in St. Christopher and Nevis. This next Council session will be held in autumn of 1993 to coincide with the 27th General Conference of UNESCO.

UNESCO SOURCES

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"AN ENDANGERED SPECIES"

African writers examined their role in the continent's future in Harare last month. Chenjerai Hove, winner of the 1989 Noma Award for Publishing in Africa, was among them.

"I have criss-crossed South Africa, looking for the past, the present, the future," the voice of Mongane Wally Serote drowns the ears of listeners. The academic walls would explode with the silence, the dense testimony of one who describes his role as a writer in South Africa in 1992. Wally Serote, recently returned home, has been in exile for more than fifteen years. His face wears wrinkles, not of anger, but of a quiet, silent search for a dialogue with his former torturers.

More than 50 writers and critics had gathered in Harare (Zimbabwe) to discuss African writers' role as we face the 21st century. They would talk about the age-old problems of languages, colonialism and neo-colonialism, Africa's sinking economy. But other voices would remind the rest that *"the age of lamenting is over."*

"It is recommended that UNESCO, in collaboration with writers organisations in Africa, and with international bodies like PEN International, Africa Watch, and Amnesty International, work for the release of all writers currently in detention, particularly in Africa, and ensure that African governments accept the fundamental value of freedom of expression, of cultural creativity, of thought." This is the first cry, from the mouths of writers and critics gathered in Harare.

SPEAKING TOO MUCH ...

What exactly has the African writer contributed towards solving Africa's crisis of thought, freedom, and economy? Since African writers emerged as major voices of the African conscience, many of them have knocked on the doors of prison, from inside, where their political leaders had locked them for *"speaking too much."*

It is because they had, as Swedish writer, Per Wastberg, put it, *"posed dangerous questions"* through novels and poems.

Among the African writers in Harare was 1991 Nobel Laureate, Nadine Gordimer. *"To have the word has come to be synonymous with ultimate authority, with prestige, with awesome, sometimes dangerous persuasion, to have prime time, a TV talk show, to have the gift of the gab as well as that of speaking in tongues,"* says the Nobel Laureate, to fellow writers and critics.

Gordimer was trying to challenge the next century with her words, trying to find herself in the new century, to *"turn the page"*, as it were, alongside the many other writers who have started asking themselves their new function as they face the African crisis. *"Maybe the page is blank,"* interrupts Zimbabwean poet, Musaemura Zimunya in tense silence of thought and doubt.

"We cry to you for help, but the wind blows away our words," said a Muhjahid Commander in 1986, speaking to the novelist Doris Lessing. He was looking at dying men and women in the war zone, those who, according to Uruguayan writer, Eduardo Galeano, *"provide the corpses"* to the guns of the generals and the words of the politicians.

The words of the guerrilla were sharp-edged, cutting both ends of the wielders of weapons: the speaker and the writer. For, both enter a battlefield, one with guns, the other with words, a pen.

CYNICS AND GOSSIP MONGERS

Most African countries have been independent for the last twenty years... But the intellectuals, including writers, have been reduced to cynics and angry gossipmongers. They cannot even write a disgruntled letter to the only newspaper which is edited by the government's chief flatterer ... *"African leaders mistake critics for enemies,"* wrote Zimbabwean poet, Musaemura Zimunya. He was expressing the fear of many writers whose only course has been a collision, one against the state. Jack Mapanje, the famous Malawian poet, languished in jail for a crime which only his gaolers knew. Four years of creative life were wasted in a grim jail, *"waiting for Godot."*

"The frailty of our words," one hears the mood in the silence of debate. *"Literature informs, forms and transforms consciences,"* West African writer, Jean-Marie Adiaffi told a conference of writers once. But some of the writers gathered then were quick to point out that there was nobody to

transform because the politicians, the planners and managers of Africa's crises are not interested in books. *"Books cannot build roads and dams,"* they say.

Per Wastberg, renowned Swedish writer and critic, painfully observes that *"an African writer must import even recognition from Europe."* As a result, his words are blown away by the wind since nobody reads the African writer.

Writers gathered in Harare were agreed that the African writer was an *"endangered species."*

CHENJERAI HOVE (Photo Tessa Colvin)

Africa's economies are in a shambles, and so, books compete for the eye of the workers with basic food and other shiny trinkets which have now become medals of an invading culture. Thus Nadine Gordimer's *"very purpose of the writer as a mutation in the agency of human culture"* becomes the frailty of the African writer.

"Writers in Africa in this century now coming to an end interpreted the greatest events on our continent since the abolition of slavery," argues Nadine Gordimer. So the African writer writes, in spite of everything, even if it means being able to subvert only one conscience, for that one conscience may, according to one writer, *"explode and spill in the streets of change."*

Political engagement, then, seems still to be at the centre of African creativity, and Gordimer traces its origin to *"within the writer, his or her creative destiny as an agency of culture, living in history."*

"Engagement does not preclude the beauty of language, the complexity of human emotions; on the contrary, such literature must be able to use all these in order to be truly engaged with life, where the overwhelming factor in that life is political struggle," continues Gordimer.

But the history of Africa is a history of many struggles, for the writer. Language diversity, art forms, literary experimentation, unrealised economic dreams and promises, compromises and betrayals.

And the writer stands in the middle of all this, alive to the call to arms so that words do not fly away with the wind.

"We are dealing with the power and powerlessness of our words. Are we going to help our continent enter the next century with dignity in our words or shame in our hearts?" I ask the writers gathered. The silence speaks of the overwhelming odds confronting the African writer whom Chinua Achebe, the grandfather of African letter, appointed *"the sensitive point of the community."*

"Consonance with the needs of the people is the imperative for the future in our view of African literature," challenges the energetic voice of Nadine Gordimer, in an attempt to stir the course of African literature from *"political engagement"* to the enrichment of the people's lives through literature.

Warns critic Abiola Irele, *"Will Africa miss the 21st century as well?"* A voice of alarm concerned that African peoples have often acquiesced to what has happened to them.

Irele was echoing the words of Ghanaian poet, Kofi Anyidoho who, in his explosive voice, warns us that the 21st century could be the *"century of our graveyard."*

"To see and to warn," an Angolan writer once said in a conference in Europe, is the purpose of an African writer. He was lamenting Africa's fate, a fate which has been reduced to the fate of a cockroach in which the writer's role is simply to create hope without lamenting indefinitely.

Thus a writer is not in a struggle *"against politicians,"* as Henri Lopes puts it, but obsessed with a passionate commitment to social justice and the fight against dictatorship and tyranny, according to exiled Somali novelist, Nurrudin Farah.

Chenjerai HOVE

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THE CULTURAL AND SOCIAL ORIGINS OF VIOLENCE were at the centre of discussion when the Advisory Working Group on the follow-up to the Yamoussoukro Declaration "Peace in the Minds of Men" (1989) held its first session in Copenhagen (Denmark) on February 8 and 9.
Participants historians, sociologists, psychologists, philosophers and political scientists, drew up recommendations for education aimed at the peaceful resolution of conflicts through the use of, for example, mediators, better knowledge of the processes involved in social construction of "enemy images" and education for peace, tolerance and democracy.

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MIGRANT WOMEN play a vital role in transmitting ethnic identities and bridging ethnic boundaries.
This was one of the starting points for discussion at the seminar *"Migrant women in the 1990s: Cross-cultural perspectives on new trends and issues"*, which was held in Barcelona (Spain) from January 26-29.
The 15 participants stressed the need for research in such fields as the economic position of migrant women, new forms of racism in Europe, changing family patterns and the ways in which migrant women cope with stress and marginality.

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A 10-MEMBER MISSION, including four UNESCO experts, travelled to Angola in February to help national authorities design an emergency education programme for children affected by the 16-year war that ravaged the country until the signing of a peace agreement last May.
Some 1.5 million people were directly affected by the conflict and drought, including some 50,000 children who were abandoned or orphaned and 400,000 people who sought refuge in neighbouring countries.
A national education-for-all round table held last July declared *"children with difficulties generated by the war"* a top priority.

GOOD MEDICINE, BITTER PILL?

Scientists at Manila Symposium call for a bigger Third World share of medicinal plant wealth

Nearly 300 scientists at the 7th Asian Symposium on Medicinal Plants, Spices and Other Natural Products (ASOMPS) last month in Manila, agreed that the collection and export of these resources to the West *"must be controlled"*.

About two-thirds of all plant species - estimated at between 250,000 and 300,000 - including medicinal varieties from which most of the world's drugs are derived, grow in the tropics. Only about 5,000 of these have been exhaustively tested for their medicinal value. Among these, to name only a few, are: *Rauwolfia serpentina* from India used to produce tranquilizers, *Pygeum africanum* from Cameroon and Zaire to treat prostate gland distrophy and *Ephedra sinica* from China for respiratory problems.

Thousands of other tropical species, are being tested for their potential in the treatment of diseases, including cancer and AIDS.

"Plant samples from the tropics, where most Third World countries are located, are collected in an "'uncontrolled manner' and taken to Europe, Japan or North America to be analysed for their drug value," said Anthony Cunningham, a botanist connected with the University of Namibia. *"The discoveries are then covered by patent laws granting exclusive rights, and subsequent profits, to the one who applied for it."*

"What happens," Dr. Cunningham explained, *"is that local botanists, and foresters collect the plants 'without fully realizing' the potential value of the resource. Moreover, these folk herbalists rarely get credit for the important scientific findings they often foster."*

Dr. Cunningham was one of 282 participants from 38 countries at the symposium, organized under the auspices of UNESCO in collaboration with the International Foundation for Science (IFS), the Asian Co-ordinating Group for Chemistry (ACGC) and other bodies at the University of the Philippines from February 2 to 7.

Another participant, Alicia Aguinaldo, chemist at the University of Santo Tomas Research Centre, said it was *"common along Manila sidewalks to see foreigners buying bulks of exotic Philippine herbs and spices from local folk. But what if one of those plants contains a cure for cancer or AIDS? Will my country also profit from its discovery?"*

"Although they are perfectly capable, Third World scientists simply do not have the financial means," said Jack Cannon, of the International Development Programme of Australian Universities and Colleges. *"So extensive research on plants and marine resources is largely concentrated in the industrialized countries."*

Cannon cited the case of *catharanthus roseus* (rosy periwinkle), a flowering plant in Madagascar from which the Eli Lilly company (U.S.) has developed a drug to treat leukemia.

"None of the profit from the discovery went back to Madagascar as development funds," said Cannon, who with more than a touch of sarcasm, added *"but then, the people there probably couldn't afford the drug anyway."*

A similar situation occurred with the drug commercially known as "Kelnac", a good cure for ulcers, developed by the Japanese firm Sankyo from a plant grown in Thailand.

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A NEW UNESCO CHAIR IN BANGKOK, the first in Asia, has just been created at Thailand's prestigious Chulalongkorn University to foster the rational use of "essential" drugs in training medical and pharmacological personnel.
The Chair, which follows about 15 others set up in Europe, Africa and Latin America in a broad range of fields, will be closely linked with the WHO Action Programme on "Essential" Drugs - some 225 generic entities (quinine, reserpine, morphine...) seen as *"more than adequate to meet 95% of the therapeutic needs of the population"* whereas some countries have from 20,000 to 30,000 different types of medicines on the market.
The Chair, at the nucleus of a centre of excellence, will also involve development of quality control laboratories and clinical evaluation of traditional remedies.

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"Human health and welfare, food security, industrial development and the ecosystems on which they depend, are all at risk, unless water and land resources are managed more effectively in the present decade and beyond than they have been in the past." Thus begins the Dublin Statement on Water and Sustainable Development, adopted by the International Conference on ***WATER AND THE ENVIRONMENT,*** held in the Irish capital from January 26-31.
Some 500 participants drew up guidelines for better management of water resources, which will be submitted to the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, June), and stressed that the necessary changes could only be realized through political commitment and involvement from the highest levels of government to the smallest communities.

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Discovered during World War II by Japanese occupation forces, the plant is now grown on a mass scale and exported by Thai farmers to Japan, which holds patent rights to "Kelnac".

"We have nothing against the discovery," said Prof. Vichai Reutrakul, a chemistry professor at Mahidol University in Bangkok. *"But we would like to have more of the research and development of future drugs carried out in Thailand."*

Prof. Cannon insisted that developing countries *"have had enough of being exploited,"* adding that there are huge western industries based on the exploitation of natural products from rainforests or tropical waters.

A FAIR SHARE

"The people in the developing countries want a fair share of the intellectual excitement of doing research and making discoveries, as well as of the profits earned ," Prof. Cannon said.

Lack of funds and laboratory facilities made it difficult to do extensive research in the Third World, said Peter Murphy of the Australian Institute of Marine Sciences, recalling that at least $200 million is needed to develop a new drug. And Lennart Prage, a Swedish molecular biologist working with the IFS, added that laborious patenting rules also contribute to the "inequitable" relationships between scientists among rich and poor countries.

Apart from the problem of "inequitable" sharing of scientific knowledge and monetary profits, scientists in the Third World are also worried by the unbridled exploitation of the tropical rainforests for profit.

In Africa, for instance, the bark of thousands of red stinkwood trees (*Pygeum africanum*) is being exported from Cameroon and Zaire to drug firms in France and Belgium, and 200 tons of the roots of another tree, known as "Devil's Claw" shipped annually to a German pharmaceutical firm for use in a remedy for arthritis.

For the first time, the symposium included marine resources on its agenda.These too are being depleted, the scientists remarked, through overfishing and the destruction of coastal habitats, thus endangering species like India's poisonous puffer fish, under investigation for its possible use with nervous disorders.

When it comes to remedies for this critical situation, Dr. John Kingston, Director of UNESCO's Regional Office of Science and Technology for South and Central Asia in New Delhi (India), lists training programmes for scientists in the region, but places paricular stress on the importance of ASOMPS which UNESCO has been organizing since 1960.

"ASOMPS has served as a forum where young research scientists from developing countries in Asia can present their work and air their priorities," Dr. Kingston said. And the process doesn't stop there. After each ASOMPS there follows a meeting of the Asia Co-ordinating Group for Chemistry (ACGC). The Group, representing all the active UNESCO programmes in Chemistry and Botany in the region, met this year from February 7 to 9, also in Manila.

"In a way ASOMPS proposes and ACGC disposes," Dr. Kingston concluded, *" providing support through various networks for analytical services, information, publications, equipment maintenance and other means to breath life into the infrastructure of poorly endowed institutions in the Third World."*

"By so doing, it is hoped that scientists will be able to teach and do research in their own way, thus furthering the socio-economic development of their countries."

Cecilia QUIAMBAO
Manila, Philippines

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RENOWNED SPANISH SOPRANO MONTSERRAT CABALLE drew a rapt audience of 1,000 at a special concert on February 16, organized by UNESCO for the victims of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. The concert was held at Chambéry (France), the site of the winter Olympics, with the singer surrounded by a magnificent decor of flowers representing the logos of UNESCO and the Games. More than $45,000 was raised from the concert alone for the UNESCO-Chernobyl Programme, to which will be added the proceeds from the sale of television rights and cassettes. The latter are available from the UNESCO-Chernobyl Programme, 7 Place de Fontenoy, 75007 Paris.

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An ***ELECTRONICS TEACHER'S GUIDE*** has just been published in UNESCO's "Science and technology education document series" (No. 40). Whereas most educators are now agreed on the importance of including electronics within the school curriculum, even as a compulsory subject, explains the Preface, there are conflicting views on how this should be done. Accordingly, the 34-page Guide proposes a programme of work which keeps electronics within school physics courses, but uses a "systems" rather than the traditional device-centred approach. Written by John Lewis, one of the leaders of the well-known Nuffield O-Level Physics Curriculum project, it is based on material developed at the Independent Schools Microelectronics Centre (ISMEC) at Westminister College, Oxford, U.K.

☛ *Section of Science & Technology Education*

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Tracking down and mapping the remains of the ancient ocean, Tethys, is one of nine new projects approved by the Board of the **INTERNATIONAL GEOLOGICAL CORRELATION PROGRAMME** when it met at Headquarters from February 3-7. The Tethys stretched from Europe and Africa to India and Burma before disappearing 65 million years ago, and its remains - along with the petroleum resources that go with them - are spread in fold belts from the Alps to Iran, Turkey and the Himalayas. The project, proposed by geologists from France and Italy has also attracted the interest of national geographical surveys, universities and petroleum companies.
The Board meeting also elected Sir Malcolm Brown, former Director of the British Geological Survey, as its new Chairman. The IGCP, set up in 1972, is a cooperative enterprise financed by UNESCO and the International Union of Geological Sciences. It now has 56 ongoing projects.

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20,000 PENCILS AND 20,000 EXERCISE BOOKS will be delivered to poor schools in Senegal this month. The exercise books were purchased with 30,000 French Francs donated by French school children to UNESCO's "One Pencil, One Exercise Book" campaign launched last February to sensitize children in industrialized countries to hardships of their contemporaries in the developing world. A private French company donated the pencils. Seven pupils and two teachers from two French schools will spend a week with Senegalese families and present the supplies to schools in need. Tickets for the trip have been provided by Air France, and the visit organized by the Senegalese multi-cultural school Cours Sainte-Marie de Hann which in 1991 won the prestigious UNESCO Prize for Peace Education.

UNESCO SOURCES

LOW COSTS, HIGH BENEFITS

Locally-made equipment for chemistry instruction

To approach learning with an unfettered mind, to invent, to delight in discovery - all this Dr K.V. Sané, a Professor of Chemistry at Delhi University, learned in his childhood. *"There was no syllabus, no exam,"* he says. *"But the guru-shishya (teacher-student) relationship was profound and the teaching intensive. It was education in pursuit of creativity."*

That creative drive, says Dr Sané passionately, is nowhere to be seen in today's education system. Where is the opportunity for students to explore and enjoy learning? To innovate and improvise?

Thus, when the idea of producing low-cost equipment locally was born it served a twin purpose: to cast a fresh look at chemistry instruction and to inject it with a dose of creativity it sorely lacked.

Scarcity of funds, dearth of good equipment and poor maintenance is the bane of university labs particularly in developing countries. Commercially manufactured instruments are expensive and sometimes too sophisticated for the needs of educational institutions. *"What high school and college labs require is equipment that is rugged, reliable and precise,"* says Dr Sané, who is also Chairman of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC)'s Committee on the Teaching of Chemistry (CTC). *"It must also be simply designed to permit quick manufacture and although its range can be restricted, it must be accurate."*

To meet these criteria, a pilot project, sponsored by UNESCO, IUPAC and the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU), was launched at Delhi University in 1979. It was geared to producing low-cost equipment, modifying syllabus, finding compatible experiments, training teachers and publicizing the project. The Edutronics Group at Delhi University designed prototypes of the pH meter, conductance meter, spectrocolorimeter, polarimeter, thermometer, polarograph, nephelometer, reflectance meter and oxygen meter and conducted scores of workshops in fabrication and maintenance.

Dr. Sane has also given the project a social content by enabling the *"weaker sections"* of the community - orphans, drop-outs, poor women - to learn manufacturing skills. In this way, 1000 pieces of equipment were produced for the Indira Gandhi Open University at costs about a fifth of commercial rates.

"What's more, our equipment when tested against imported commercial models, proved to be quite as efficient," said Dr. Sané who would like to *"get voluntary and philanthrophic organisations into the locally-made, low-cost equipment picture,"* and tighten industry-university links *"to help us professionalise and export"*.

Dr Sané feels that industrial culture must enter our universities. And when it does, there is no stopping at chemistry equipment. Chemicals, books, video software and other lab supplies are also waiting in the wings to be cheaply and competently produced and efficiently marketed.

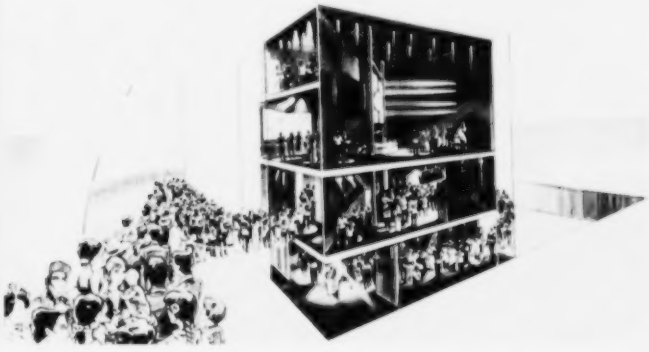
TEACHERS TRAINING IN THE MANUFACTURE OF LOW-COST EQUIPMENT (Photo UNESCO).

Latika PADGAONKAR
New Delhi, India

THE UNITED NATIONS IN SEVILLE

UNESCO coordinates UN participation at Expo 92

The building itself, a 21 m. sq. cube with alternating concrete and glass sides, symbolizes humanity. The metal arch that overflies the building represents the universe. The harmony between these two extremely simple forms is a stylized translation of the message that will be conveyed by the United Nations Pavilion at this year's Universal Exhibition: the aspiration towards harmony among all human beings and harmony between humanity and the universe.



THE UN PAVILION DESIGNED BY JOSÉ RAMÓN RODRÍGUEZ GAUTIER.

One hundred and ten countries, the greatest artists from all over the world and an estimated 18 million visitors, will meet in Seville (Spain), from April 20 to October 12, around the theme of the exhibition, "The Age of Discovery". On the occasion of this 500th anniversary of the encounter between Europe and America, and at a time when the frontiers of knowledge are being pushed back at an ever faster pace, Expo '92 will offer a journey into the past and into the future, illustrated along the way by great scientific landmarks.

The United Nations family could not fail to be present and UNESCO, whose concerns are closely linked to the theme, was made responsible for the preparations. Thomas Keller, Assistant Director-General of UNESCO, appointed Commissioner General of the United Nations for Expo '92, was charged with co-ordinating that participation and securing funding for the operation. He therefore set out in search of the $10 million needed; half for the construction of the pavilion and the other half to cover organizing and running costs. In January 1991 the financial arrangements were concluded through the patronage of the Banco Bilbao Vizcaya, with the co-operation of the governmental body in charge of the exhibition and the assistance of the Spanish National Commission for UNESCO.

The pavilion, which has about 1,000 square metres of floor space, was designed by the Spanish architect José Ramón Rodríguez Gautier. It rises up at the heart of Expo '92 beside an artificial lake, which is also flanked by the Spanish and Autonomous Regions' pavilions and America Square. A maximum of 600 visitors per hour will, on entering, pass between information panels focusing in the United Nations in general and, more particularly, on the 37 organizations and agencies represented in Seville. But all send out a common message urging humanity to *"create a better world"*. This will be highlighted throughout four successive areas featuring a 20 minute audio-visual presentation, composed exclusively of music and images - without commentary so as to overcome the language barrier - showing the role of the United Nations system in achieving this goal.

The main structure was in place last month and everything will be ready in good time. The key date for the pavilion will be United Nations Day on June 26, which will be marked by a visit from U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. For UNESCO, however, the highlight will come on September 8 when a prize giving ceremony will be held to mark International Literacy Day.

René LEFORT

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The first $5,000 UNESCO CRAFTS PRIZE for Asia has been awarded to Mrs. Ussanee Vannasukont, a Thai weaver whose work combines the ancient Mudmee (Ikat) technique with modern design. Second prize ($3000) was awarded to Mrs. Kong Thong Nanthavongdouangsy from the Peoples Republic of Laos, while the third prize ($2000) went to Gajam Ramulu of India. This annual award has been established in an effort to stimulate craftsmanship and creativity throughout the Asian region.

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A SERIES OF 14 TELEVISION PROGRAMMES on the environment and development, produced by 14 countries under the aegis of the United Nations, will be launched at the MIP-TV fair in Cannes (France) next month. UNESCO and other UN agencies have helped finance the project, in which each country deals with a subject of special interest. Thus China's CCTV has produced "The Future of an Overpopulated Country", NTV in Nigeria "Health for All", Doordarshan in India "Feeding the Planet", and France's Antenne 2 an analysis of climate change and the environment in its programme "SOS Terre". The programmes are expected to be shown widely during the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in June.

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The Bureau of the International Scientific Committee for the **HISTORY OF CENTRAL ASIAN CIVILIZATIONS** *will hold its 6th editorial meeting in New Delhi (India) from April 13 to 17. The* **CHILEAN WRITER JORGE EDWARDS** *will speak at Headquarters on April 24, addressing the theme "Ordre et aventure de la langue" (Order and Adventure of Language) to mark the first anniversary of the UNESCO Chair Miguel de Cervantes. For the occasion, "El Quijote" which won an award at the last Cannes Film Festival, will be shown on April 27 and 29. The Advisory Committee for* **BIOSPHERE RESERVES** *will hold its first meeting at Headquarters from April 27 to 29. On the agenda are: measures for the scientific and legal consolidation of the international network, and examination of candidacies of about a dozen new reserves.* **THREE EXHIBITIONS** *are scheduled to take place at Headquarters: "African Dance, its laws and techniques" from April 22 to 30; "The Planet of Victims" presenting 88 photos shot among war victims, mainly children, by Swiss photographer Yaki Gooldin, from May 4 to 20; and works by the Indian artist V. Bala from May 4 to 19.* **"THE ROLE" OF AFRICA** *and its Repercussions on the Encounter of Two Worlds" is the theme of a symposium to be held in Praia (Cape Verde) from May 4 to 8. At the meeting, about 60 participants will explore the cultural, spiritual and material influence of the African presence in America. The first* **INTERNATIONAL MARINE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD** *will be presented at Headquarters on May 5. Finally, the* **INTERNATIONAL ROSTRUM OF COMPOSERS** *(IRC) will be held at Headquarters from May 11 to 15. The IRC is organized each year by the International Music Council (IMC) to encourage the exchange of contemporary music among radio stations.*

OUR NEXT ISSUE *will focus on the* **SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND FURNITURE** *which UNESCO is helping design and construct to meet the needs of specific situations and using local materials and techniques: multi-purpose centres in rural areas, disaster-resistant schools, hostels for young girls ...*

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